



# Working Age Adult Policy Task Force

## Recommendations Report

**June 22, 2006**

# **Introduction**

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## **Background**

The Working Age Policy Task Force was convened by the Developmental Disabilities Council to bring together stakeholders to review the Division's Working Age Adult Policy, discuss issues/concerns, and make recommendations to the Division.

The task force included consumer and family members of the Developmental Disabilities Council, representatives of the two major employment service provider associations, developmental disabilities county coordinators and a representative of the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The task force met three times between February and April of 2006. The task force members are listed in Appendix A.

## **Task Force Process**

The task force met three times at SeaTac. Meetings were held on February 17<sup>th</sup>, March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Recommendations were developed and a draft report was distributed by the taskforce members to their stakeholder groups for comments and input. The process resulted in the entire taskforce adopting the implementation recommendations and the benchmarks, and the majority recommending the changes to the policy language.

## **Report Structure**

The report contains 3 sections: 1) Recommendations for changes/additions to the Definitions & Policy sections of the County Services for Working Age Adults – Policy 4.11, 2) Implementation Recommendations and 3) Recommended Benchmarks.

## **Request of the Division of Developmental Disabilities**

The Taskforce is asking the Division of Developmental Disabilities to adopt the recommended changes to the policy wording, recommendations for implementation and to apply the recommended benchmarks to assess the impact of the policy on their clients.

## Recommendations for changes/additions

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***The task force recommends the Division make the following changes or additions to the definitions section of the County Services for Working Age Adults Policy 4.11:***

Note: Recommended new words are highlighted in red; recommended deletions are in strikethrough.

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**Employment Supports:** Services that support individuals to pursue or maintain gainful employment in integrated settings in the community, **as described in the individual's Pathway to Employment Plan.** Key elements of these services include the following: 1) Supports are tailored to the needs, interests and abilities of the individual; and 2) ~~All individuals receive supports~~ **Services support the individual to achieve their Pathway to Employment** ~~and maintain integrated, gainful employment in their community.~~

**Gainful employment:** Employment **that earns wages.** ~~reflects achievement of or progress towards a living wage.~~

**Living wage:** ~~The amount needed to enable an individual to meet or exceed his or her living expenses. \*~~

\*Note: The task force recommends the Division delete this definition. Living wage is a controversial term that is difficult to adequately define and is problematic to monitor

**Integrated settings:** **A setting typically found in the community where you come into contact with people without disabilities as you do your work. The amount of contact you have with people without disabilities is the same as what a person without disabilities in the same type of job would experience.** <sup>1</sup> ~~Typical community settings not designed specifically for individuals with disabilities in which the majority of persons employed and participating are individuals without disabilities.~~

**Add definition:**

**Pathway to employment:** **An individualized plan with a timeline, activities, milestones, and goals leading to gainful, maintained, and integrated employment, where progress is measurable.**

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<sup>1</sup> same as DVR definition in WAC 388-891-0010 with minor changes to incorporate people first language.

***The task force recommends the Division make the following changes to the policy section of the County Services for Working Age Adults Policy 4.11:***

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DDD Field Staff shall authorize services to working age adults that support the individual to pursue and maintain integrated, gainful employment **as described in their Pathway to Employment Plan**. Services for persons under the age of 62 that do not emphasize the pursuit or maintenance of employment in integrated settings can be authorized only by exception to policy. Adults approaching retirement age, or over the age of 62, will continue to have the option of receiving support to pursue and maintain gainful employment.

## **Implementation Recommendations:**

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***The task force makes the following implementation recommendations:***

1. Case Resource Managers receive training and technical assistance on how to implement the policy, including:
  - ✓ Clear definition of what constitutes a pathway to employment
  - ✓ Description of options are allowable on the pathway,
  - ✓ Individuals can decline a job if for good reasons i.e. it is not a good fit, transportation options are **either not** appropriate or **not** available, or there are extenuating circumstances or it is not in the person's best interests.
2. A tool is developed that assures the "pathway to employment" is broadly defined, not time limited and has the flexibility to serve everyone who wants to work but may have more challenging needs and require a longer path.
3. Pathway to employment activities may include the following options in addition to traditional or typical employment:
  - ✓ Volunteer work and internships
  - ✓ Less than full-time paid work
  - ✓ Training & skill development
  - ✓ Job shadowing
  - ✓ Self-employment and other non-traditional employment options
4. The Division works collaboratively with the WorkSource system to build capacity to serve people with developmental disabilities and support the goal of integrated employment through the generic employment system.
5. The Division works collaboratively with schools to increase employment outcomes before graduation so students exit school with a job.

6. Service providers, county coordinators, and Case Resource Managers receive training and follow-up technical assistance in strategies of job development, customized employment, self-employment and other best practices to increase integrated, gainful employment outcomes.
7. Annually, the DD Council reviews the employment outcome data to assess the impact of the policy on the affected population and makes recommendations to DDD for improvements/changes as needed.
8. Annually, the performance of Case Resource Managers & counties is evaluated to determine if the values and intended outcomes of the policy were met and corrective actions have been taken if people lost services without just cause and/or due process.

## Recommended Benchmarks:

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### ***The task force makes the following recommendations for working age employment benchmarks:***

1. An Individual Pathway to Employment Plan is developed for all working age adults. This Plan clearly describes the individual's community employment goal, methods to help them achieve this goal, and how progress is to be determined and measured.
2. Progress towards the goals in an individual's Pathway to Employment is clear and measurable.
3. The number of working age adults who are gainfully employed increases from the previous year.
4. The amount of wages earned by working age adults increases each year.
5. The number of working age adults who have made measurable progress on their pathway to employment increases each year.
6. The average length of time it takes for new working age adults to be employed is less than the average amount of time it took the new working aged adults the previous year.
7. There is no substantive increase in the number/percentage of working age adults dropped from services from the previous year.

## Appendix A: Task Force Members

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Diana Zottman	Council Member, Chair	King County
Janet Adams	Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)	Thurston County
Leo Finnegan	Council Member, Parent	King County
Vickie Foster	Council Member, Self-Advocate	King County
Larry Garman	Council Member, Parent	Grays Harbor County
Mike Hatch	Council Member/Service Provider	Snohomish County
Carrie Burnam	P2020	Snohomish County
Denise Rothleutner	County Developmental Disabilities Services	Pierce County
Bruce Tabb	County Developmental Disabilities Services	Kittitas County
David Wunderlin	Rehabilitation Enterprises of Washington (REW)	King County
Staffing		
Clare Billings	Council Staff	
Linda Walling	Council Staff	